

Flu shots—again

Because of the outbreak of the Victoria type of flu in Florida & in some states along the US-Canadian border, **Health, Education & Welfare Dept.** (HEW) is now permitting people to receive the bivalent (combination) flu shot that was being given nationwide until Dec. 16 last year. Combination shot has vaccines for both Victoria & swine flu, & at this time the Victoria flu vaccine is only available in this combination. HEW recommends that elderly Americans & persons with chronic illnesses get the shot from local health centers or clinics or at a doctor's office. HEW's recommendation, however, does not reactivate the National Influenza Immunization Program of 1976. If there appears to be a chance of a Victoria flu epidemic, **Public Health Service** (PHS) will promptly begin an extensive campaign to give shots to persons with a high risk of getting the flu.

HEW also has lifted the ban on shots of the Hong Kong flu vaccine. Vaccine protects persons against this milder form of flu that commonly affects children. Health officials & doctors have not been permitted to give this type-B flu shot since Dec. 16.

Since there are no signs of an outbreak of swine flu, the HEW ban on individual swine flu shots will continue.

Swine flu shot program stopped Dec. 16 because of cases of temporary paralysis (called Guillain-Barre syndrome) & some deaths. HEW decided the risk of death because of Victoria flu was greater than the risk of paralysis or death from getting Guillain-Barre. [See page 3.]

Ban urged

Environmental Defense Fund, a nonprofit, public interest group, has petitioned **Consumer Product Safety Commission** (CPSC) to ban the use of Tris, a chemical used to make children's sleepwear flame retardant. Fund maintains that the chemical can cause cancer in laboratory animals & can be swallowed by children who suck on the sleeves of their sleepwear or that it might be absorbed through the skin.

S-p-r-e-a-d-i-n-g the word

New York City's Consumer Affairs Dept. has published *Consumer Rights for Disabled Citizens*. Although the booklet is intended for New Yorkers, it does contain information about Federal laws & regulations in addition to New York laws & regulations. Booklet also has advice on travel, recreation, insurance, housing & other general topics. To order, send \$2 to Dr. Lilly Bruck, Education Division, Consumer Affairs Dept., 80 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013.

consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs

Vol. 7, No. 4, Feb. 15, 1977

Energy update: Natural gas situation

President Carter signed the Emergency Natural Gas Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-2) into law on Feb. 2. Law gives special powers to President & **Federal Power Commission** (FPC) to provide emergency transportation & deliveries of natural gas to assist in meeting the natural gas needs of homes, small commercial establishments & other high priority users. Law also permits higher natural gas prices at "fair & equitable" rates above the top wholesale prices previously set by FPC.

New law requires the President to declare a natural gas emergency before the emergency deliver & price policies of the law can be put into effect by FPC. Natural gas emergency occurs when the President finds that a severe natural gas shortage is endangering—or is about to endanger—the supply of natural gas for high priority users. "High priority" refers to home heating, use by small commercial establishments & any other use of natural gas necessary for life, health or maintenance of buildings & equipment. President Carter declared such an emergency within minutes after signing the act into law. This natural gas emergency will continue until April 30 or until President Carter cites an end to the emergency situation, whichever is earlier.

In an Executive Order, the President directed the Chairman of FPC to assume the authorities granted to the President under the new law (except authority to declare a natural gas emergency) & to work with Secretary of **Interior**, Administrator of **Federal Energy Administration** (FEA), other members of FPC & other heads of other Executive agencies.

New law immediately provided for shipments of natural gas from Mexico & from California to the eastern US.

Energy update: Firewood

Forest Service (FS) has liberalized rules for cutting & collecting free firewood from National Forests in 24 states. Officials at each forest are in charge of modified regulations & permits for consumers who want to get personal supplies of firewood.

Some forests will designate "temporary free use areas" where consumers can collect dead or fallen wood without having a permit. Some standing trees will be available for consumers to cut if a forest official decides "thinning" the area is necessary.

If you want to get free firewood at a National Forest, contact the forest supervisor or district ranger to get information on availability, permits & procedures.

Hints from HUD

To keep out the cold this winter—and to keep out the heat if you use air conditioning during hot weather—you have to do more than be sure doors & windows have weatherstripping & are sufficiently caulked. Here are some hints from **Housing & Urban Development Dept.** (HUD) to help you keep out the cold & keep in the heat:

- If doors & windows still leak cold air despite weatherstripping, use towels, rugs or newspaper to block the flow of air.

- Do not overlook basement or attic windows & doors. A cold basement draws heat from the rest of the house. Cold air leaking down from a loose-fitting attic door can undo a lot of heat-saving measures keeping measures in the rest of the house.

- Large expanses of glass—such as picture windows or sliding patio doors—can cause a great loss of heat. If these are not covered by storm windows, cover them with inexpensive clear plastic, which serves the same purpose as a storm window—it traps dead air, which acts as a buffer.

- Windows should be covered with draperies—preferably heavy ones—at night. Draperies help insulate the window area, cut down on heat loss & eliminate drafts.

- Also, take advantage of the solar heat that windows can let in when the sun is shining directly on the windows. Open draperies & raise shades.

- Make sure the fireplace damper is closed when the fireplace is not in use. Block off air flow entirely by covering the cold fireplace with a rug, cardboard or towels.

- Use a fireplace sparingly because in most cases the roaring fire that looks & feels so inviting is actually drawing cold air into the house, sending warm air up the chimney & using extra heating fuel to compensate.

- If your house has an attached garage with direct access to the house, enter & leave the house by the garage entrance whenever possible. Garage acts as a buffer between the outside cold & inside warmth. Keep garage doors closed when not in use.

- Turn off heat in rooms not being used & keep the doors closed.

- Move furniture away from heating vents to keep it from blocking the air flow & from absorbing heat.

- Change air filters regularly; dirty filters in a forced air system cut down on the system's efficiency.

Energy information

For information about natural gas & other energy matters, contact **National Energy Information Center**, Washington, DC 20461; phone: 202-566-9820.

What to do when the heat's off

Public Health Service (PHS) lists some steps to take in case of sudden heat loss where you live:

1. Immediately close off a small room (or section) of your house or apartment & move your family into it. Pick a room on the warm side of the house or apartment, usually the south side. Preferably use a room with only one outside wall, rather than a corner room. If the windows are not insulated, cover them on the inside with plastic. Several layers of clear plastic garment bags, the kind you get from the dry cleaners, will do the job. If you do not have those, use a blanket. Experiment with the blanket during the day. Sunlight coming through the window may help warm the room.

2. If the floor is bare, cover it with rugs or blankets. The more the better.

3. If the room has a door, keep it closed. You may have to put a rug or towel against the crack at the bottom of the door to prevent a draft. If you do not have a door to the room, cover the entrance with blankets.

4. If the room has a fireplace, use it. But make sure there is enough air coming into the room from elsewhere in the house to make a draft. Otherwise the fireplace will smoke. If you run out of firewood, burn tightly rolled newspapers. Do not close the damper, however, before the fire is completely out.

5. If it is bitterly cold out, you may have to drain water pipes & toilets before the water in them freezes. Learn how to do that from a plumber before the emergency arises. Water in the hot water tank will stay warm for a day or so. But if the house is going to be cold for any length of time, drain the hot water heater also. Save some water for personal use.

6. Wear warm clothes. Layers of clothing work best to contain body heat. Wear heavy socks. Make sure they stay dry. Wear a wool cap.

7. If there is food in the house that should not be allowed to freeze, put it in the refrigerator.

8. Let a neighbor or someone in the community know that you are without heat. This is especially important if you live in an isolated rural area.

9. If your house has no electricity as a source of alternate heat, or if you cannot get sufficient warmth from a fireplace, go immediately to a shelter area. If the roads are bad, notify rescue personnel.

Use supplemental heat sources with care

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in a joint announcement with the **National Fire Prevention & Control Administration** (NFPCA) & **National Fire Research Center** at **National Bureau of Standards** (NBS) warns consumers to exercise extreme caution if they find a need to use supplemental heating sources in their house or apartment. The 3 agencies specifically warned against using gas ranges or ovens for heating rooms. Any unvented fuel-burning appliance is capable of producing potentially deadly levels of carbon monoxide.

Here are suggestions for safe use of room heaters:

1. Use the proper fuel for each device.

2. Keep .91 meters (3 feet) clearance around heaters or stoves.

3. Use a screen around stoves or room heaters that have open flames.

4. Avoid floor heaters in bathrooms—do not touch one when you are wet.

5. Keep young children away from room heaters particularly when they are wearing nightgowns that can be sucked in by a draft created by the heater and then ignited.

Agencies also cautioned consumers against using excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite the soot in the chimney by overbuilding the fire. Consumers with fireplaces should never remove the screen in front of the fireplace in an effort to get more heat, nor should they burn charcoal indoors as an alternate source of fuel. Charcoal gives off deadly amounts of carbon monoxide.

Official statement & consent form for flu shots

Following is the new consent form—approved by **National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical & Behavioral Research**—that persons must read & sign before getting the combination shot for Victoria & swine flu:

A program for voluntary immunization of individuals against both swine & Victoria flu was begun in the fall of 1976 under a special act of Congress. Over 42 million people were vaccinated under the program. In December of **Public Health Service** (PHS) received reports that some who has been vaccinated had suffered an illness called Guillain-Barre, which is described later in this document. As a result, the program was suspended Dec. 16 to determine whether & to what extent Guillain-Barre was caused by the flu shots.

After review of additional & more detailed information & after further consultation with medical & other experts concerning both the occurrence of a limited number of cases of Victoria flu & the causes of Guillain-Barre, the immunization program has been resumed on a limited basis. The reason for this partial resumption is to give certain American people, particularly the elderly & persons with chronic illnesses who have a high risk of suffering serious adverse consequences from influenza, an opportunity to be vaccinated against Victoria influenza.

The flu

Flu is caused by viruses. When people get flu they may have fever, chills, headache, dry cough or muscle aches. Illness may last several days or a week or more & complete recovery is usual. However, complications may lead to pneumonia or death in some people. For the elderly & people with diabetes or heart, lung and kidney diseases, flu may be especially serious.

If you are less than 50 years old, you are unlikely to have developed natural immunity to swine flu because no significant number of people have been sick with it for some 45 years. You may or may not have some natural immunity to Victoria flu.

While there was a substantial number of cases of Victoria flu last year, there has been no significant number of reported cases of swine flu since a brief & limited outbreak of the disease at Fort Dix, NJ, in early 1976.

It is not possible to estimate the risk to an individual of getting the flu this year.

The vaccine

This vaccine contains the only available immunization against Victoria flu. It also contains the swine flu vaccine. It will not give you flu because it is made from killed viruses. A single shot will protect approximately 3 out of 4 persons age 25 & over from these 2 types of flu for the rest of the current flu season; the vaccination may not be effective in approximately 1 out of 4 persons are 25 & over. For persons under 25, a second shot must be taken at least one month after the first shot to provide the same likelihood of protection.

Risks & side effects

Most people will have no harmful side effects from the vaccine. Some will have tenderness in the area of the shot for a day or so. A few will have fever, chills, headaches or muscular aches within the first 48 hours. However, as with the administration of any vaccine or drug, there is always the possibility of more severe effects & in rare instances even of death.

Guillain-Barre

As mentioned, there is recent evidence that Guillain-Barre appears in some people after vaccination. When it appears, it generally does so within a few weeks of vaccination. Information collected for the purposes of the flu immunization program to date shows that among persons who have not taken flu vaccine, slightly more than one in a million get Guillain-Barre during any 8-week period. However, during the period of 8 weeks after vaccination, about 10 out of every million persons vaccinated have suffered Guillain-Barre. Thus, while the risk is not high, evidence suggests that persons who are vaccinated are approximately 10 times more likely to get Guillain-Barre than those who are not vaccinated. Guillain-Barre can be relatively mild to very severe. It causes a paralysis, usually of the legs & arms. In most cases, the paralysis disappears & the recovery is complete. Recent statistics indicate, however, that in about 5% of the cases the patient dies & in about 10% of the cases some muscles will be weak for a long time or permanently. Thus, the risk of death from Guillain-Barre for persons of all age groups who are vaccinated is approximately one out of 2 million. For elderly & chronically ill persons, the risk of death from Guillain-Barre is approximately one out of every one million persons vaccinated.

Pregnancy

Many people ask about the risks of flu vaccination during pregnancy. There is not now any specific data on whether the risks are the same or different from what they are for the general population. For this reason a pregnant woman should be advised by a doctor on the benefits & risks for her or her offspring.

(Continued on back page)

Consent form (Continued)

Special precautions

Some people should not take flu vaccine. You should note very carefully the following precautions:

- A child under 3 years of age in good health should not ordinarily receive flu vaccine. If the child has a serious chronic illness, the vaccine may be recommended, but you should see a doctor first.
- People allergic to eggs should be vaccinated only on the advice & under the supervision of a doctor.
- People with fever should not be vaccinated until the fever is gone.
- People who have received another type of vaccine in the past 14 days should see a doctor before taking the vaccine.

If after vaccination you have any symptoms more severe than a moderate fever, chill, headache or mild muscular ache within the first 48 hours or any symptoms continue longer than 48 hours, you should see a doctor.

Injury claims

While the risk of harm from flu vaccine is small, those who believe they have been injured by this vaccination may have a claim. The law provides that a claim may normally be filed against the US Government. Information on how to file a claim may be obtained by writing to the Public Health Service Claims Office, Parklawn Bldg., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857 [phone: 301-443-1904].

If you have any questions about flu or flu vaccine, please ask.

Consent

I have read the above information about Vicoria & swine flu, the vaccine & the special precautions. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, & I understand the benefits & risks of flu vaccination as described in this document. I request that it be given to me or to the person named below for whom I am authorized to consent.

INFORMATION ON PERSON TO RECEIVE VACCINE

Name (please print)

Birthdate

Age

Address

County of residence

Signature of person to receive
vaccine or parent or guardian

Date vaccinated

CONSUMER NEWS is published the 1st & 15th of each month by the Office of Consumer Affairs, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., to report Federal Government programs for consumers. Use of funds for printing this publication through Sept. 30, 1979, approved by Office of Management & Budget. Authorization to reproduce any or all items is granted. Editorial address is CONSUMER NEWS, Office of Consumer Affairs, Washington, DC 20201; Ed Riner, Editor (202-245-6877); Marion Q. Ciacio, Managing Editor (202-245-6861). Sold by Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009; subscription \$4 a year, payable to "Supt. of Documents." Send address change to Supt. of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1976-210-988/39
DHEW PUBLICATION NO. (OS) 77-108

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF H.E.W.
391

First Class



Consumer News: Feb. 15, 1977

Printed : Feb. 15

Mailed Feb. 16

CNEW SERIA3005 ISSUE013R 1
SERIALS DEPT
XEROX/UNIV MICROFILMS
300 N ZEEB RD
ANN ARBOR MI 48106